

II. PUBLIC INPUT

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CITIZEN FOCUS GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

To aid in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City of Lakeland gathered input through two Citizen Focus Group sessions held at I.H. Managerial Park clubhouse. Members of the Focus Group included residents, City Staff, and Park Advisory Board members. Participants were asked to brainstorm and present their ideas, needs, goals, and concerns for citywide Parks and Recreation in the City of Lakeland. Information gathered from these sessions will serve as the blueprint for the successful development of parks, programs, and activities for the City.

The meeting began with a presentation of the existing park facilities and an explanation of the beginning and subsequent development of the City's Parks Department. Included in this presentation was a history of park creation, land purchases, and program and activity development within Lakeland. The purpose and goals of the public input session were explained,

along with the process the meeting would follow. The citizens were presented with examples of communities that had developed Recreation Master Plans, and the success those communities were experiencing in their parks departments.

PROCESS

Participants were randomly assigned to 5 different groups, with members of the Lakeland Park Advisory Board serving as discussion leaders for the various groups. A single topic was presented to the groups, who were then given 10-15 minutes to discuss. Participants would write their personal opinions of the topic on individual note cards, followed by a period of group discussion. After this interaction, groups would create a 'Top 3' list, which would be displayed for the different groups to compare their opinions.

Discussion topics included:

- Identify the most memorable experiences of successes created by the Lakeland Parks and Recreation Department.
- Identify the key factors for continued success for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.
- Identify the benefits that are the most important to you.
- Describe the vision for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.
- Identify which type of park Lakeland needs more of.
- Existing and potential challenges for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.
- Recreation programs needed by Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.
- Specialized facilities/amenities needed by the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.
- Strategies to fund the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.

- Partnerships that would support service for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system.

(The complete listing of comments received from the Focus Group Members is listed in the appendix section of this Master Plan.)

CITIZEN FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The results of the group lists were combined to form an overall list for the following topics:

- Descriptors for the Vision for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation system
- Parks needed by the Lakeland Parks And Recreation system
- Types of programs needed
- Specialized facilities/amenities needed

For each of the four topics, group members were asked to rank two items as the most important and two items as the second most important. The results were then analyzed by giving a double

value to the number one ranked items and a single value to number two ranked items. These number values were then added to create an ordered ranking for each topic to show which factors were the most important to the focus group participants.

Example:

1.	Develop a Connected Community	12	15	39	8.	Promote City Pride	12	15	27
2.	Serve the Entire Community	12	15	27	9.	Sustainable	12	15	27
3.	Create an 'Identity' for the City	12	15	27	9.	Service Excellence	12	15	27
4.	Preserve Natural Environment	12	15	27	9.	Fun	12	15	27

12 - #1 rankings (double value) = 24
 15 - #2 rankings (single value) = 15
 Total Value = 39

The following are the results of the Citizen Focus Group Session.

Descriptors for the Vision for the Lakeland Parks and Recreation System:

1. Develop a Connected Community
2. Serve the Entire Community
3. Create an 'Identity' for the City
4. Preserve Natural Environment
5. Health & Well-Being
6. Environmental Stewardship
7. Well-Designed
8. Promote City Pride
9. Sustainable
10. Service Excellence
11. Fun
12. Variety
13. Leader – Local, State, National
14. Economy
15. Play
16. Progressive
17. Citizen Driven
18. Grown & Learn
19. Memorable Experiences
20. Innovative
21. Inclusive

Types of Parks Needed by the Lakeland Parks and Recreation System:

1. Community Center
2. Multi-Use Trails for Walking, Biking, Etc.
3. Large Multi-Use Parks that Serve the Whole Community
4. Parks with Lake, Creek, or Water Frontage
5. Skate Park
6. Spray Park
7. A Park consisting of Primarily Sport Fields

8. Natural Areas
9. Water Sports Facilities
10. Multi-Use Trails
11. Mid-Size Parks that contain active and passive recreational opportunities and serve several neighborhoods.
12. Wildlife Preserves
13. Small Neighborhood Parks
14. Water Park
15. Educational Park
16. Historic Sites

Types of Programs Needed by the Lakeland Parks and Recreation System:

1. Youth Sports
2. Fitness/Wellness Classes
3. Special Events (festivals, concerts in the park)
4. Classes for Life-Long Learning
5. Skateboard Park
6. After School Programs

Specialized Facilities/Amenities Needed by the Lakeland Parks and Recreation System:

1. Indoor Recreation of Community Centers
2. Lighted Sports Fields
3. Water/Spray Park
4. Skateboard Park
5. Trails and Pathways
6. Swimming Pools
7. Reservable Group Picnic Areas